

REMARKS

Claims 1–6, 9–11, and 17 and 51-70 are pending in this application with claims 1, 51, 63 and 68 being in independent form. All pending claims were rejected by the Examiner. Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments, statements and arguments below is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants, in this response, submit an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) with the English abstracts of foreign references previously submitted on September 2, 2003. Applicants also wish to make the following clarifications:

The reference previously listed in the IDS filed on September 2, 2003 as JP 1127762 corresponds to Japanese Utility Model Application No. 20, 525 of 1988 (listed as JP 63020525);

The reference previously listed in the IDS filed on September 2, 2003 as JP 4126855 corresponds to Japanese Utility Model Application No. 43,270 of 1991 (listed as JP 3043270); and

The reference previously listed in the IDS filed on September 2, 2003 as JP 4113960 corresponds to Japanese Utility Model Application No. H3-17623 of 1991 (listed as JP 3017623).

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph**Claims 1, 51, 63, and 68**

Independent claims 1, 51, 63, and 68 were rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The examiner stated that the specification did not provide support for “for a short period of time so as not to soak” as was claimed in claims 1, 51, 63, and 68.

In order to help expedite the prosecution of the application, Applicants have amended claims 1, 51, 63, and 68. Applicants believe that these amendments render the Examiner’s rejections of claims 1, 51, 63, and 68 moot and that these claims are now in condition for allowance. As such, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner’s rejections of claims 1, 51, 63, and 68 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

Claims 2-6, 9-11, 17, and 52-70

The Examiner rejected claims 2-6, 9-11, 17, and 52-70 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Because claims 2-6, 9-11, 17, and 52-70 directly or indirectly depend from independent claims 1, 51, 63, and 68, Applicants believe that the amendments made for independent claims 1, 51, 63, and 68 also apply to dependent claims 2-6, 9-11, 17, and 52-70. Besides, claims 2-6, 9-11, 17, and 52-70 present separate bases for patentability over and above those in claims 1, 51, 63, and 68. As such, Applicants believe that dependent claims 2-6, 9-11, 17, and 52-70 are also in condition for allowance for at least similar reasons as for independent claims 1, 51, 63, and 68.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claims 2-6, 9-11, 17, and 52-70 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 68-70

Claim 68 was rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention.

In order to help expedite the prosecution of the application, Applicants have amended claim 68. Applicants believe that this amendment renders the Examiner's rejection of claim 68 moot and that claim 68 is now in condition for allowance. As such, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claim 68 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Claims 69-70

The Examiner rejected claims 69-70 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as their invention. Because claims 69-70 depend directly from independent claim 68, Applicants believe that the amendment made for independent claim 68 also apply to dependent claims 69-70. Besides, claims 69-70 present separate bases for patentability over and above those in claim 68. As such, Applicants believe that dependent claims 69-70 are also in condition for allowance for at least similar reasons as for independent claim 68. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claims 69-70 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

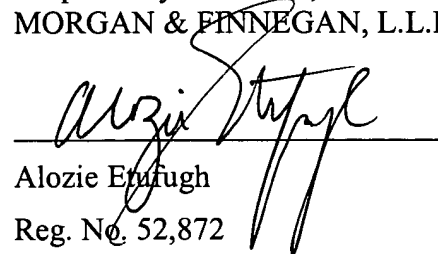
For at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants believe that all of the claims as presently presented, are patentable, and that this application is now in condition for allowance.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for the timely consideration of this amendment under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 0140-4126US5.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 0140-4126US5. A
DUPLICATE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS ATTACHED.

Respectfully submitted,
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